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THE  
Letter of Columbus  
on the Discovery of  
AMERICA

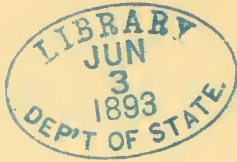
*A Facsimile Reprint of the Pictorial Edition of 1493,  
with a Literal Translation, and an Introduction*

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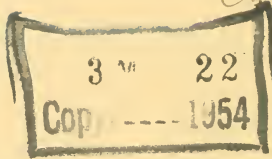
Second Edition



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*The present facsimile of one of the Columbus Letters belonging to the Lenox Library is published by the Trustees at this time as an appropriate tribute to the memory of the great discoverer.*

*JOHN S. KENNEDY,*  
*President.*

*New-York, May 1, 1893.*



## INTRODUCTION.

THE letter of Columbus giving the earliest information of his great discovery was first printed in Spanish at Barcelona in April, 1493. It was immediately translated into Latin and sent to Rome for publication, where it appeared in at least three editions, and was reprinted at Basle, Paris, and Antwerp. One of the rarest and most interesting of these is the pictorial edition, complete in ten leaves, which is reproduced here in exact facsimile, accompanied by a literal translation. The curious woodcuts with which it is illustrated are supposed by some to have been copied from drawings made originally by Columbus himself. They give remarkable representations of the admiral's own caravel, of his first landing on Hayti and meeting with the natives, and of the different islands which he visited.

The memorable voyage which this letter describes lasted two hundred and twenty-four days, from the 3d of August, 1492, when Columbus sailed from the harbor of Palos on the southern coast of Spain, with three small caravels and about ninety men, to the 15th of March, 1493, when he returned in a single vessel to

the same port. Nine days after leaving Palos he reached the Canary Islands, where he remained until the 6th of September, taking in provisions and making other preparations. On the 8th, after lying becalmed for two days, he left these islands, and steered his way directly across the Atlantic, with the expectation of reaching India or China. On the morning of Friday, the 12th of October, corresponding to the present 21st of October, he came in sight of one of the Bahama Islands, where he landed and took possession in the names of the Spanish sovereigns. On the 15th he visited another island, which he named Santa Maria de la Concepcion; on the following day he reached the island Fernandina; and on the 19th, Isabella. Supposing that he was in the neighborhood of Cipango or Japan, he sailed toward the south, and on the 28th of October landed on Cuba, which he named Juana. Here he remained, exploring the northeast coast, until December 5th, when he sailed over to Hayti, called by him Española. After exploring the northern shore of this island, where he lost his own vessel by shipwreck on the 24th, he sailed in the Niña for Spain on the 16th of January, 1493, reaching the Azores on the 18th of February, Lisbon on the 4th of March, and Palos on the 15th of the same month.

The following list comprises all the editions and



translations of the Columbus letter known to have been printed before the year 1500:—

(1) The original folio edition in Spanish, addressed to the “Escribano de Racion,” Luis de Santangel, and supposed to have been printed at Barcelona in April, 1493. It is complete in two leaves or four pages. The only known copy, now in the Lenox Library, was discovered only a few years ago in Spain.

(2) The quarto edition in Spanish, also addressed to the “Escribano de Racion,” and containing four leaves or eight pages. It was probably printed in Spain, in 1493. The only known copy was discovered about thirty years ago in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana at Milan. A facsimile by photozincography, made from an inaccurate hand-tracing of this copy, was published at Milan in 1866, and from this facsimile several recent forgeries seem to have been copied.

(3) The edition in Latin with King Ferdinand’s name alone in the title, described by Mr. HARRISSE as No. 1 of his list, and by Mr. MAJOR as No. 3. It is in four leaves or eight pages, and is supposed to have been printed at Rome by Stephen PLANCK, in 1493. A copy is in the Lenox Library.

(4) The edition in Latin with the names of Ferdinand and Isabella in the title, described by Mr. HARRISSE as No. 4, and by Mr. MAJOR as No. 1, of their

respective lists. In other respects it is almost identical with the preceding, page for page and line for line, and probably was printed at Rome by Planck, in 1493. The Lenox Library possesses a copy.

(5) The edition in Latin printed at Rome by Eucharius Argenteus, or Silber, in 1493, complete in three leaves or six pages. A copy is in the Lenox Library.

(6) The pictorial edition in Latin, reproduced here in facsimile from the original in the Lenox Library, which is the only perfect copy known. As the same woodcuts appear in a reprint appended to the drama of Carolus Verardus, published by Bergmann de Olpe at Basle in 1494, it is supposed that this edition was also printed at Basle, by the same printer, in 1493.

(7) The edition in Latin entitled *Epistola de insulis repertis de nouo*, printed at Paris by Guyot Marchand, probably in 1493. It is in four leaves or eight pages, and contains only the name of Ferdinand in the title. Two copies are known, one in the Royal Library at Turin, the other in the University Library at Göttingen.

(8) The edition in Latin entitled *Epistola de insulis de nouo repertis*, printed at Paris by Guyot Marchand, in 1493 or 1494. It is evidently a reprint of the preceding, with which it agrees in the number of the

leaves, and in containing only the name of King Ferdinand in the title. Only two copies are known, one in the John Carter Brown Library at Providence, R. I., and the other (imperfect) in the National Library at Paris. A facsimile is in the Lenox Library.

(9) The edition in Latin entitled *Epistola de insulis nouiter repertis*, printed at Paris by Guyot Marchand, in 1493 or 1494. It is also in four leaves, and agrees closely with the two preceding. Two copies only are known, both in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. A facsimile is in the Lenox Library.

(10) The edition in Latin beginning *Epistola Christophori Colom*, supposed to have been printed at Antwerp by Thierry Martens, in 1493 or 1494. It contains only the name of Ferdinand in the title, and is in four leaves. The only known copy is in the Royal Library at Brussels.

(11) The pictorial edition in Latin appended to the drama of Verardus, published by Bergmann de Olpe at Basle in 1494. It is evidently a reprint of the separate pictorial edition, already described. There is a copy in the Lenox Library.

(12) The edition in Italian verse entitled *Storia della inventione delle nuoue insule di Chanaria indiane*, printed at Rome on the 15th of June, 1493. The version was made by Giuliano Dati. The discovery

of the only known copy was announced recently by Mr. HARRISSE.

(13) The edition in Italian verse entitled *Questa e la hystoria della inuentioe delle diese Isole di Cannaria Indiane*, printed at Florence on the 25th of October, 1493, in four leaves, being a reprint of the preceding. The only known copy, lacking the second and third leaves, is in the library of the British Museum. A facsimile is in the Lenox Library.

(14) The edition in Italian verse entitled *La lettera dellisole che ha trouato nuouamente il Re dispagna*, printed at Florence on the 26th of October, 1493. It is another edition of the preceding. The only known copy, complete in four leaves, is in the library of the British Museum. A facsimile is in the Lenox Library.

(15) The edition in Italian verse entitled *Isole Trouate Nouamente Per El Re di Spagna*, printed at Florence, and dated 26th of October, 1495. It is in four leaves. The only known copy is in the Biblioteca Trivulziana at Milan.

(16) The edition in Italian verse entitled *La lettera dellisole che ha trouato nuouamente el Re dispagna*, printed at Florence, and dated 26th of October, 1495. The only known copy, complete in four leaves, is in a private library in New-York.

(17) The edition in German printed at Strasburg by

Bartholomew Küstler, in 1497, in seven leaves. There is a copy in the Lenox Library.

Besides the printed editions mentioned above, there are extant several manuscript copies in Spanish. One in the Archives of Simancas, addressed to the "Escribano de Racion," was printed by Navarrete in his *Coleccion de Viages* (Madrid, 1825), Vol. I, pp. 167-175. It is also described, and an English synopsis given, by G. A. Bergenroth, in the *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain* (London, 1862), Vol. I, pp. 43-48. Another manuscript, in Spanish, addressed to Don Gabriel Sanchez, was discovered by Varnhagen in the Colegio Mayor at Cuenca, and published by him at Valencia in 1858. Columbus also made a full report of his voyage in the form of a diary, which he sent to the Spanish sovereigns. The original of this has not been found, but an abridgment, or synopsis, made by Bartolome de Las Casas, is extant, and has been printed in Navarrete's *Coleccion*. The transcript of this manuscript which was probably used by Muñoz and Navarrete is now in the Lenox Library. An English translation of this "Personal Narrative," made by Samuel Kettell, was printed at Boston in 1827.

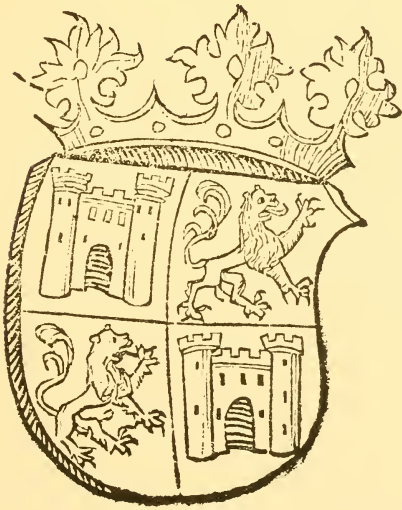
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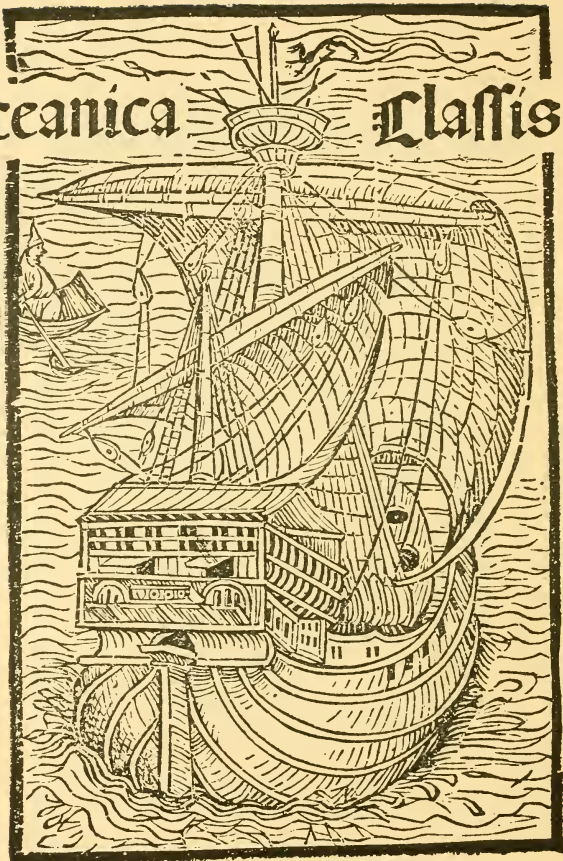


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# Kegnú byspanie.



# Oceanica Classis





# De Insulis inuentis <sup>2</sup>

Epistola Cristoferi Colom (cui etas nostra multū debet : de Insulis in mari Indico nup inuētis. Ad quas perquirendas octauo antea mense: auspicijs et ere Inuictissimi Fernandi Hispaniarum Regis missus fuerat) ad Adag- nificum dñm Raphaelez Sanxis: eiusdē serenissimi Regis Thesaurariū missa. quam nobi lis ac litterat⁹ vir Aliander d Losco: ab Hispano ydeomate in latinū conuertit:tercio kl's Adaj. Ad. cccc. xcij. Pontificatus Alexandri Sexti Anno Primo.

**Q**uoniam suscepte prouintie rem pfectam me psecutum fuisse: gratū tibi fore scio: has pstitui exarare: que te vniscuiusq; rei in hoc nostro itinere geste inuenteq; admoneāt. Tricesimotercio die postq; Gadibus discessi: in mare Indicū perueni: vbi plurimas Insulas innumeris habitatas hominib⁹ reperi: quarū oīm p felicissimo Rege nostro: preconio celebrato ⁊ vexillis extensis: cōtradicante nemine possessiōnē accepi. primeq; earum: diui Saluatoris nomen imposui (cuius fret⁹ auxilio) tam ad hāc q; ad ceteras alias puenim⁹. Eam vero Indi

Insula hispana



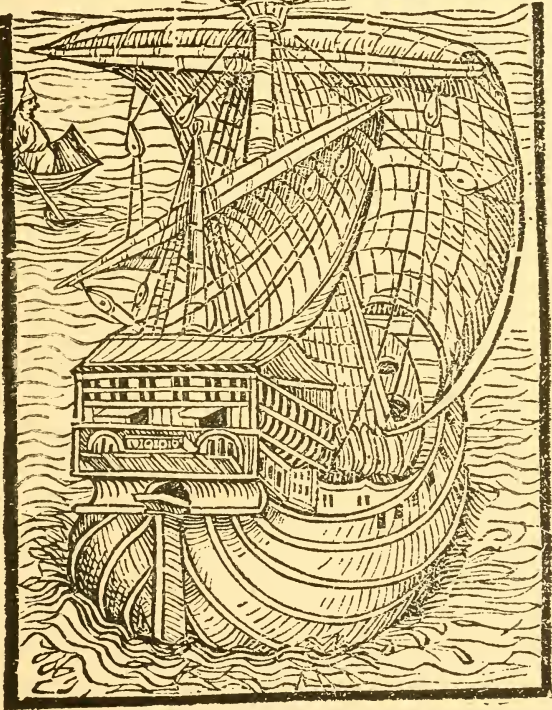
Guanabany vocant. Alias etiã vnã quanq̃  
 nouo nomine nuncupauit. Quippe aliam Insu-  
 lam Sancte a Marie Lóceptiõis. aliam Fernã-  
 dinam. alias hysabellam. aliã Johanam. ⁊ sic  
 de reliquis appellari iussi. Quãprimũ í eã In-  
 sulam quã dudũ Johanam vocari dixi appuli-  
 mus: iuxta ei⁹ littus occidentẽ versus aliquã-  
 tulum processi: tamq̃ eam magnã nullo reper-  
 to sine inueni: vt non insulam: sed cõtinentem  
 Chatay prouinciã esse crediderim: nulla tamẽ  
 vidẽs oppida municipiaue in maritimis sita cõ-  
 finibus: præter aliquos vicost ⁊ predia rustica:  
 cum quorũ incolis loqui nequibam: quare sis-  
 mul ac nos videbant surripiebãt fugam. Pro-  
 grediebar vltra: existimans aliquam me vrbẽ  
 villasue inuenturum. Deniq̃ videns q̃ longe  
 admodum pgressis: nihil noui emergebat: et  
 huiusmodi via nos ad Septentrionem defere-  
 bat: q̃ ipse fugere exoptabam: terris etenim re-  
 gnabat bruma: ad austrumq̃ erat in voto cõ-  
 tendere: nec minus venti flagitantibus succedẽ-  
 debãt. cõstitui alios nõ operiri successus: et sic  
 retrocedens ad portum quendam quem signa-  
 ueram sum reuersus: vnde duos hoies ex no-  
 stris in terram misi. qui inuestigarent: esset ne  
 Rex in ea prouincia/vrbesue aliquẽ. hũ per



tres dies ambularūt: inuenerūtq̄ innumeros  
 populos ⁊ habitatōes: paruas tñ et absq̄ vllō  
 regimine: quapropt̄ redierūt. Interea ego iā  
 intellererā a q̄busdam Indis: quos ibidē su-  
 sceperā: quō hmōi prouincia: insula quidem  
 erat. ⁊ sic perrexi orientē versus: ei⁹ semp strin-  
 gens littoza vsq̄ ad miliaria .cccxxij. vbi ipsi⁹  
 insule sunt extrema. hinc aliā insulā ad. orien-  
 tem prospexi: distantem ab hac Johana milia-  
 ribus. liij. quā protinus Hispanam dixi: in eā  
 q̄ cōcessi: ⁊ direxi iter quasi p̄ Septentrionez  
 quē admodū in Johana ad orientem: miliaria  
 dlxiiij. que dicta Johana ⁊ alie ibidem insule  
 q̄ fertillissime existunt. hec multis atq̄ tutissi-  
 mis ⁊ latis: nec alijs quos vnq̄ viderim cōpa-  
 randis portib⁹: est circū data. multi maximi ⁊  
 salubres hanc interfluūt fluuij. multi quoq̄ et  
 eminentissimi in ea sunt montes. Omnes he insu-  
 le sunt pulcerrime ⁊ varijs distincte figuris: p̄-  
 uie: ⁊ maxima arboꝝ varietate sidera lamben-  
 tiū plene: q̄s nūq̄ folijs priuari credo: quip-  
 pe vidi eas ita virētes atq̄ decoras: ceu mēse  
 Maio ī hispania solēt eē: q̄ ⁊ alie florētes: alie  
 fructuose: alie ī alio statu: fm vnus cuiusq̄ ōli-  
 tatē vigebāt: garriebat philomena: ⁊ alij passe-  
 res varij ac innum. eri: mēse Nouēbris q̄ ip̄e per  
 eas deambulabā. Sant p̄terea in dicta insula

Iohana septē vel octo palmarū genera: q̄ p̄ce-  
ritate ⁊ pulchritudine (quēadmodū cetere oēs  
arbores/herbe/fructusq̄) n̄as facite exuperāt  
Sūt ⁊ mirabiles pin⁹/agri/⁊ prata vastissima/  
varie aues/varie mella/variaq̄ metalla:ferro  
excepto. In ea aut̄ quā Hispanā supra dixim⁹  
nūcupari: maximi sunt mōtes ac pulcri:vasta  
rura/nemora/campi feracissimi/seri/pacisq̄ ⁊  
cōdendis edificijs aptissimi. Portuū in hac in-  
sula cōmoditas: ⁊ p̄stantia fluminū copia salu-  
bitate admixta hoīm:q̄ nisi quis viderit: cre-  
dulitatē supat. Huius arbores pascua ⁊ fruct⁹  
multum ab illis Iohane differūt. Hec p̄terea  
Hispana diuerso aromatis genere/auro/me-  
tallisq̄ abundat. cui⁹ quidē ⁊ oīm aliarū quas  
ego vidi: ⁊ quaz cognitionē habeo:īcole vtri-  
usq̄ sexus nudi semp̄ incedūt: quēadmodum  
edunt̄ in lucem. p̄ter aliquas feminas. q̄ fo-  
lio frondeue aliq̄: aut bombicino velo: pudē-  
da operiūt:qđ ip̄e sibi ad id negociū parāt. Ca-  
rent hi oīes (vt supra dixi) quocunq̄ genere  
ferri. carent ⁊ armis: vtpote sibi ignotis nec ad  
ea sūt apti. nō pp̄t̄ corporis deformitatē (cū sint  
bñ formati) s̄ qz sūt timidi ac pleni formidine.  
gestāt tñ p̄ armis arūdines sole p̄stas: ī quaz  
radicib⁹ hastile qđdā ligneū siccū ⁊ in mucro-  
nē attenuatū figūt: neq̄ his audēt iugit̄: nā

# Oceanica Classis



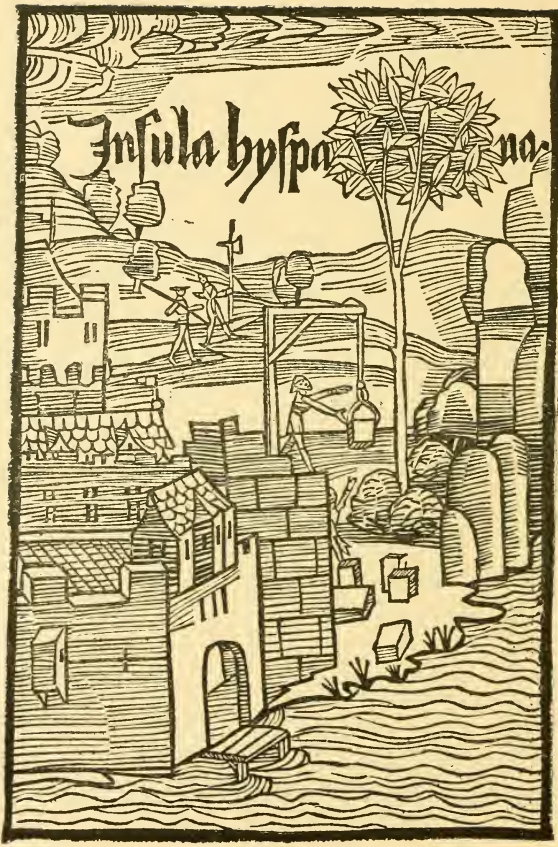
sepe euenit cū miserim duos vel tris homines  
ex meis ad aliquas villas: vt cū eaz loquerē-  
tur incolis: exiisse agmē glomeratū ex Indis:  
et ybi nostros appropinquare videbāt: fugam  
celeriter arripuisse: despzetis a patre liberis z  
ecōtra. z hoc nō q̄ cuipiam eozū damnū aliq̄d  
vel iniuria illata fuerit: immo ad quoscūq; ap-  
puli z q̄bus cū verbū facere potui: quicq̄d ha-  
bebā sum elargit⁹: pannū aliaq; p̄multa: nulla  
mibi facta versura: sed sunt natura pauidi ac  
timidi. Letez ybi se cernūt tutos: omī metu re-  
pulso: sunt ad modū simplices ac bone fidei: z  
in omībus que habent liberalissimi: roganti q̄  
possidet inficiat nemo: quin ipsi nos ad id po-  
scendum inuitāt. Abaximū erga oēs amorē p̄-  
seferūt: dāt queq; magna p̄ paruis. minima lz  
re nihiloue ptenti: ego attē p̄hibui ne tam mi-  
nima z nulli⁹ p̄cū hisce darent: vt sunt lancis/  
parapsidū / vitriq; fragmēta / jtez clauī / ligule /  
quanq; si hoc poterāt adipisci: videbāt eis pul-  
cerrima mūdi possidere iocalia. Accidit enim  
quēdam nauitā: tantū auri pondus habuisse  
p̄ vna ligula: quāti sūt tres aurei solidi: z sic  
alios p̄ alijs mīoris p̄cū: p̄ftim p̄ blanquis no-  
uis: z q̄busdā nūmis aurcis: p̄ q̄b⁹ habēdis da-  
bāt q̄cqd̄ petebat vēditor: putaynciā cū dimi-  
dia z duas auri: vl̄ trigīta z q̄dragīta bombiq̄



pondo: quā ipi iā nouerāt. Itē arcuum/ampho-  
 re/hydrie/dolūq; fragmēta: bombicez auro tā  
 q; bestie cōparabāt. qđ quia iniquū sane erat:  
 vetui: deditq; eis multa pulcra z grata q̄ mecū  
 tulerā nullo iterueniēte p̄mio: vt eos mihi fa-  
 cili⁹ p̄ciliarē: fierētq; xp̄icole: z vt sint proni in  
 amorē erga Regē/Reginā principesq; nostros  
 et vniuersas gētes Hispanie: ac studeāt p̄gre-  
 re z coaceruare: eaq; nobis tradere q̄b⁹ ipi af-  
 fluūt z nos magnope idigem⁹. Nullā hū norūt  
 ydolatriā: imo firmissime credūt oēz vim: oēz  
 potētiā: oīa demq; bona esse ī celo: meq; inde  
 cū his nauib⁹ z nautis descēdisse: atz h̄ aīo vbi  
 fui susceptus postq; merū repulerāt. Nec sunt  
 segnes aut rudes: quin summi ac p̄spicacis in-  
 genij: z hoīes qui transfretāt mare illd: nō sine  
 admiratiōe vniuscuiusq; rei rationē reddunt:  
 sed nūq; viderunt gentes vestitas: neq; naues  
 hmōi Ego statim atq; ad mare illd pueni: e pri-  
 ma insula quosdā Indos violenter arripui: q̄  
 ediscerēt a nobis: z nos p̄iter docerent ea: q̄z  
 ipsi in hisce partibus cognitionē habebant. et  
 ex voto successit: nā breui nos ipos: z hū nos:  
 tum gestu ac signis: tum verbis intellexerunt.  
 magnoq; nobis fuere emolumēto. veniunt mō  
 mecū tū qui semp putant me desiluisse e celo  
 q̄uis diu nobiscū versati fuerint hodieq; vers

senſ. ⁊ hi erant primi: q̄ id quocūq; appellaba  
mus nunciabāt: alij deinceps alijs elata voce  
dicētes. Venite venite ⁊ videbitis gētes ethe  
reas. Quāobrē tā femīe q̄ viri: tā impuberēs  
q̄ adulti: tam iuuenes q̄ senes: d̄posita formi  
dine paulo ante d̄cepta: nos certatim viſebāt  
magna iter ſtipāte caterua alijs cibū/ alijs po  
tum afferentib⁹: maxio cū amore ac beniuolē  
tia incredibili. Habz vnaqueq; inſula multas  
ſcaphas ſolidi ligni: ⁊ ſi anguſtas: longitudine  
tū ac forma noſtris biremib⁹ ſimiles: curſu aut̄  
velociores. Regunt̄ remis tantūmodo. Harū  
quedā ſunt magne: quedā parue: quedā i me  
dio p̄ſiſtunt. Plures tamē biremi que remigēt  
duodeuiginti tranſtris maiores: cū qb⁹ in oēs  
illas inſulas: que innumere ſunt: traūciſ. cūq;  
his ſuā mercaturā exercēt: et inter eos comer  
tia ſunt. Aliquas ego harū biremium ſeu ſca  
pharū: vidi q̄vehebāt ſeptuaginta ⁊ octuagin  
ta remiges. In omnib⁹ his inſulis nulla eſt di  
uerſitas inter gentis effigies. nulla in moribus  
atq; loquela: quin oēs ſe intelligūt adinuicē:  
que res putilis eſt ad id qd̄ ſereniſſimū Regē  
noſtrū c̄optare precipue reor: ſc̄z eoz ad ſan  
ctam xp̄i fidem p̄uerſionē. cui quidē quantum  
intelligere potui ſacilimi ſunt ⁊ p̄ni. Dixi quē

admodū sum pgressus antea insulā Iohanaꝝ  
 p rectū tramitez occasus in orientem miliaria  
 cccxxij. fm quā viā ⁊ intuallū itineris possum  
 dicere hāc Iohanā esse maiorē Anglia ⁊ Sco  
 tia sil: nanqꝫ vltra dicta. cccxxij. passuū milia:  
 in ea pre q̄ ad occidentē pspectat: due: quas  
 non petij: sup sunt puincie: quaz alterā Indi  
 Anan vocāt: cui⁹ accolle caudati nascunt. Tē  
 dunt in longitudinem ad miliaria. clxxx. vt ab  
 his q̄s veho mecū Indis pcepi: qui om̄is has  
 callēt insulas. Hispanie vero ambit⁹ maior est  
 tota Hispania a cologna vsqꝫ ad fontē ravidū  
 hincqꝫ facile arguit q̄ quartū ei⁹ lat⁹ qd̄ ipe  
 p rectā lineā occidentis in orientē traieci: mili  
 aria ptinet. dxi. Hec insula ē affectāda ⁊ affe  
 ctata nō spernēda in qua ⁊ si aliaz oīm vt dixi  
 p inuictissimo Rege n̄ro solenniter possessio  
 nem accepi: earūqꝫ imperiū dicto Regi peni  
 tus cōmitti: i oportuniōri tñ loco: atqꝫ om̄i lu  
 cro ⁊ cōmertio pdecenti: cuiusdā magneville:  
 cui Natiuitatis dñi nomē dedim⁹: possessionē  
 peculiariter accepi. ibiqꝫ arcem quandaz eri  
 gere extemplo iussi: que modo iam debet esse  
 pacta: in quā hoīes qui necessarij sunt viss: cū  
 om̄i armoz genere: ⁊ vltra annū victu oportu  
 no reliq̄. Itē quādā carauellā: ⁊ p alijs pstruē  
 dis tā i hac arte q̄ in ceteri peritos: ac eiusdē



insule Regis erga nos beniuolentiā ⁊ familia-  
 ritatē incredibilē. Sūt em̄ gētes ille amabiles  
 admodū ⁊ benigne: eo q̄ Rex p̄dictus me fra-  
 trem suum dici gloriabat̄. Et si animū reuoca-  
 rent: ⁊ his q̄ ī arce manserūt nocere uelint: ne-  
 queūt: quia armis carēt: nudi icedūt: ⁊ nimiū  
 timidi. ideo dictā arcem tenētes: dū taxat p̄nt  
 totā eā insulā nullo sibi imminente discrimine  
 (dūmodo leges quas dedim⁹ ac regimē nō ex-  
 cedāt) facile detinere. In om̄ib⁹ his insulis ut  
 intellexi: quisq̄ vni tm̄ p̄iugi acquiescit: p̄ter  
 principes aut reges: q̄bus viginti habere licz.  
 Femine magis q̄ viri laborare vident: nec be-  
 ne potui intelligere an habeāt bona pp̄ria: vi-  
 di em̄ qd̄ vn⁹ habebat alijs īpartiri: p̄t̄im da-  
 pes/ obsonia/ ⁊ hm̄oi. Nullū apd̄ eos monst̄  
 repcri: ut pleriq̄ existimabant: sed hoīes ma-  
 gne reuerētie atq̄ benignos. Nec sunt nigri ve-  
 lut ethiopes. habēt crines planos ac demissos  
 nō degunt vbi radiorū solaris emicat calor. p̄  
 magna nāq̄ hic est solis vehementia: p̄pterea  
 q̄ ab æq̄noctiali linea distat. vbi videtur/ gra-  
 dus sex ⁊ viginti Ex montiū cacuminib⁹ ma-  
 ximū q̄ viget frig⁹: sz id q̄dem moderant̄ In-  
 di: tū loci psuetudīe: tū rex calidissimaz q̄b⁹  
 frequēter ⁊ luxuriose vescunt̄ presidio. Itaq̄  
 mōstra aliq̄ nō vidi: neq̄ eoz alicubi habui co-

gnitionem: excepta quadāz insula Charis nūcupata : que secunda ex Hispana in Indiam transfretātib⁹ existit. quam gens quedam a finitimis habita ferocior incolit. hi carne humana vescunt̃. habent predicti biremiū genera plurima: quibus in omnes Indicas insulas traŭciunt/depredāt/surripiūtq̃ quecūq̃ p̃nt. Nihil ab alijs differunt nisi q̃ gerunt more femineo longos crines. vtunt̃ arcub⁹ et spiculis arundineis: fixis (vt dixim⁹) in grossiori pte at tenuatis hastilib⁹. ideoq̃ habēt feroces: quare ceteri Indi inexhausto metu plectuntur: sz hos ego nihili facio plus q̃ alios. Hi sunt qui cōeunt cum quibusdam feminis: que sole insulam adateunin primā ex Hispana in Indiam traŭcientib⁹ habitant. he autē femine nulluz sui sexus opus exercent: vtunt̃ em̃ arcub⁹ et spicul̃ sicuti d̃ eaz piugib⁹ dixi muniūt: sese lamēnis eneis q̃z maria ap̃d eas copia existit. Aliam mihi insulā affirmant supradicta Hispana maiorē: ei⁹ incole carēt pilis. auroq̃ inē alias potissimū exuberat. hui⁹ insule et aliaz q̃s vidi hoīes mecū porto: q̃ hoz q̃ dixi testimoniū phibēt. Deniq̃ vt nr̃i discessus et celeris reuersiōis cōpēdiū: ac emolumētū breuib⁹ astringā h̃ polliceor: me nr̃is Regib⁹ inuictissimis puo eoz fultū auxilio: tantū auri datuz quantum

eis fuerit opus. tñm vero aromatuꝝ. bombicis.  
 masticis (q̄ apud **L**hium dūtatur inuenit̄) tan  
 tūq; ligni aloes. tantum fuoz hydrophilatoꝝ  
 rum: quantū eozū maiestas voluerit exigere.  
 item reubarbarū ⁊ alia aromatuꝝ genera: q̄ hi  
 quos in dicta arce reliqui iā inuenisse: atq; in  
 uenturos existimo. qñquidem ego nullibi ma  
 gis sum moratus nisi quantū me coegerūt vē  
 ti: p̄terq; in villa **H**atiuitatis: dū arcem con  
 dere ⁊ tuta om̄ia esse prouidi. **Q**ue ⁊ si maxia  
 et inaudita sunt: multo tamē maiora forent si  
 naues mihi vt ratio exigat subuenissent. **V**lex  
 multū ac mirabile hoc: nec nostris meritis eoz  
 respondēs: sed sancte **C**hristiane fidei: nostroꝝ  
 rumq; **R**egū pietati ac religioni: quia qđ hu  
 manus cōsequi nō poterat intellectus: id hūa  
 nis concessit diuinus. **S**olet em̄ deus suos su  
 os: quicq; sua p̄cepta diligūt: etiā i impossibili  
 bus exaudire: vt nobis i p̄ntia p̄tigit: q̄ ea p̄se  
 cuti sum⁹: q̄ hacten⁹ mortaliū vires m̄ime atti  
 gerāt. nā si hax insulaz q̄piā aliqđ sc̄pser̄t aut  
 locuti sūt: oēs p̄ambages ⁊ p̄iecturas nemo se  
 eas vidisse asserit: vñ p̄pe videbat̄ fabula **I**gi  
 tūr **R**ex ⁊ **R**egia p̄ncipes ac eoz regna felicis  
 sima: cūcteq; alie **C**hristianoꝝ puincie **S**alua  
 tori dño n̄ro **J**esu xp̄o agam⁹ gr̄as: q̄ tāta nos  
 victoria munereq; donauit: celebret̄ p̄cessiōes

peragant solennia sacra. festaq; fronde velent  
delubra. Exultet *Christi* i terris: quæ admodum  
in celis exultat: cum tot populorum pditas an  
hac animas saluatum iri preuidet. Letemur ⁊  
nos: tum ppter exaltationem nostre fidei. tum p  
pter rerum temporalium incremeta: quorum non solum  
hispania sed vniuersa *Christianitas* est futu  
ra princeps. hec vt gesta sunt sic breuiter enarra  
rata. Vale. *Ulisbone* pridie ydus *Abarcij*.

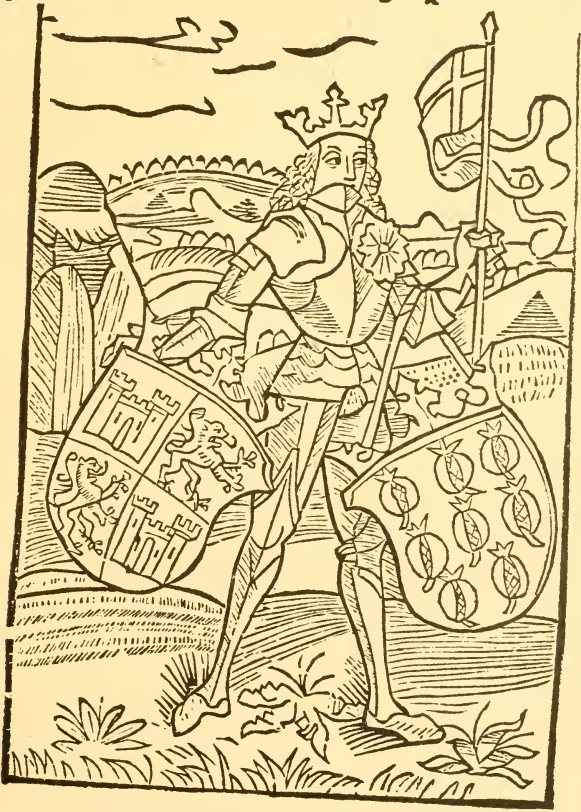
*Cristoforo Colom Oceane classis Prefecto.*

Epigrama. *R. L. de Corbaria Episcopi*  
*Montispalusij*  
Ad Inuictissimum Regem *Hispaniarum*

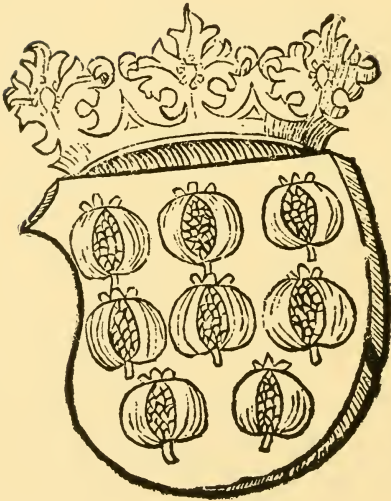
Jam nulla *Hispanis* tellus addenda triumphis  
Atq; parum tantis viribus/orbis erat.  
Nunc longe *Lois* regio deprensa sub undis.  
Auctura est titulos *Betice* magne tuos.  
Unde repertori merito referenda *Colubo*  
Gratia: s; summo est maior habenda deo:  
Qui vincenda parat noua regna tibiq; sibiq;  
Teq; simul fortem prestat ⁊ esse pium.



# Fernād<sup>o</sup> rex byspania



# Granata:



**TRANSLATION.**



## THE DISCOVERED ISLANDS.

Letter of Christopher Columbus, to whom our age owes much, concerning the islands recently discovered in the Indian sea.<sup>1</sup> For the search of which, eight months before, he was sent under the auspices and at the cost of the most invincible Ferdinand, king of Spain.<sup>2</sup> Addressed to the magnificent lord Raphael Sanxis,<sup>3</sup> treasurer of the same most illustrious king, and which the noble and learned man Leander de Cosco has translated from the Spanish language into Latin, on the third of the kalends of May,<sup>4</sup> 1493, the first year of the pontificate of Alexander the Sixth.

**B**ECAUSE my undertakings have attained success, I know that it will be pleasing to you: these I have determined to relate, so that you may be made acquainted with everything done and discovered in this our voyage. On the thirty-third day after I departed from Cadiz,<sup>5</sup> I came to the Indian sea, where I found many islands inhabited by

1 In the other editions this part of the sentence reads: "concerning the islands of India beyond the Ganges, recently discovered."

2 The name of Isabella (Helisabet) is also omitted in the title of one of Plannck's editions; it is found in the two other Roman editions.

3 The correct form is Gabriel Sanchez.

4 April 29th.

5 A mistake of the Latin translator. Columbus sailed from Palos on the 3d of August, 1492; on the 8th of September he left the Canaries, and on the 11th of October, or thirty-three days later, he reached the Bahamas.

men without number, of all which I took possession for our most fortunate king, with proclaiming heralds and flying standards, no one objecting. To the first of these I gave the name of the blessed Saviour,<sup>1</sup> on whose aid relying I had reached this as well as the other islands. But the Indians call it Guanahany. I also called each one of the others by a new name. For I ordered one island to be called Santa Maria of the Conception,<sup>2</sup> another Fernandina,<sup>3</sup> another Isabella,<sup>4</sup> another Juana,<sup>5</sup> and so on with the rest. As soon as we had arrived at that island which I have just now said was called Juana, I proceeded along its coast towards the west for some distance; I found it so large and without perceptible end, that I believed it to be not an island, but the continental country of Cathay;<sup>6</sup> seeing, however, no towns or cities situated on the sea-coast, but only some villages and rude farms, with whose inhabitants I was unable to converse, because as soon as they saw us they took flight. I proceeded farther, thinking that I would discover some city or large residences. At length, perceiving that we had gone far enough, that nothing new appeared, and that this way was leading us to the north, which I wished to avoid, because it was winter

1 In Spanish, San Salvador, one of the Bahama islands. It has been variously identified with Grand Turk, Cat, Watling, Mariguana, Samana, and Acklin islands. Watling's Island seems to have much in its favor.

2 Perhaps Crooked Island, or, according to others, North Caico.

3 Identified by some with Long Island; by others with Little Inagua.

4 Identified variously with Fortune Island and Great Inagua.

5 The island of Cuba.

6 China.

on the land, and it was my intention to go to the south, moreover the winds were becoming violent, I therefore determined that no other plans were practicable, and so, going back, I returned to a certain bay that I had noticed, from which I sent two of our men to the land, that they might find out whether there was a king in this country, or any cities. These men traveled for three days, and they found people and houses without number, but they were small and without any government, therefore they returned. Now in the meantime I had learned from certain Indians, whom I had seized there, that this country was indeed an island, and therefore I proceeded towards the east, keeping all the time near the coast, for 322 miles, to the extreme ends of this island. From this place I saw another island to the east, distant from this Juana 54 miles, which I called forthwith Hispana;<sup>1</sup> and I sailed to it; and I steered along the northern coast, as at Juana, towards the east, 564 miles. And the said Juana and the other islands there appear very fertile. This island is surrounded by many very safe and wide harbors, not excelled by any others that I have ever seen. Many great and salubrious rivers flow through it. There are also many very high mountains there. All these islands are very beautiful, and distinguished by various qualities; they are accessible, and full of a great variety of trees stretching up to the stars; the leaves of which I believe are never shed, for I saw them as green and flourishing as they are usually in Spain

<sup>1</sup> Hispaniola, or Hayti.

in the month of May; some of them were blossoming, some were bearing fruit, some were in other conditions; each one was thriving in its own way. The nightingale and various other birds without number were singing, in the month of November, when I was exploring them. There are besides in the said island Juana seven or eight kinds of palm trees, which far excel ours in height and beauty, just as all the other trees, herbs, and fruits do. There are also excellent pine trees, vast plains and meadows, a variety of birds, a variety of honey, and a variety of metals, excepting iron. In the one which was called Hispana, as we said above, there are great and beautiful mountains, vast fields, groves, fertile plains, very suitable for planting and cultivating, and for the building of houses. The convenience of the harbors in this island, and the remarkable number of rivers contributing to the healthfulness of man, exceed belief, unless one has seen them. The trees, pasturage, and fruits of this island differ greatly from those of Juana. This Hispana, moreover, abounds in different kinds of spices, in gold, and in metals. On this island, indeed, and on all the others which I have seen, and of which I have knowledge, the inhabitants of both sexes go always naked, just as they came into the world, except some of the women, who use a covering of a leaf or some foliage, or a cotton cloth, which they make themselves for that purpose. All these people lack, as I said above, every kind of iron; they are also without weapons, which indeed are unknown; nor are they competent to use



them, not on account of deformity of body, for they are well formed, but because they are timid and full of fear. They carry for weapons, however, reeds baked in the sun, on the lower ends of which they fasten some shafts of dried wood rubbed down to a point; and indeed they do not venture to use these always; for it frequently happened when I sent two or three of my men to some of the villages, that they might speak with the natives, a compact troop of the Indians would march out, and as soon as they saw our men approaching, they would quickly take flight, children being pushed aside by their fathers, and fathers by their children. And this was not because any hurt or injury had been inflicted on any one of them, for to every one whom I visited and with whom I was able to converse, I distributed whatever I had, cloth and many other things, no return being made to me; but they are by nature fearful and timid. Yet when they perceive that they are safe, putting aside all fear, they are of simple manners and trustworthy, and very liberal with everything they have, refusing no one who asks for anything they may possess, and even themselves inviting us to ask for things. They show greater love for all others than for themselves; they give valuable things for trifles, being satisfied even with a very small return, or with nothing; however, I forbade that things so small and of no value should be given to them, such as pieces of plates, dishes and glass, likewise keys and shoe-straps; although if they were able to obtain these, it seemed to them like getting the most

beautiful jewels in the world. It happened, indeed, that a certain sailor obtained in exchange for a shoe-strap as much worth of gold as would equal three golden coins; and likewise other things for articles of very little value, especially for new silver coins, and for some gold coins, to obtain which they gave whatever the seller desired, as for instance an ounce and a half and two ounces of gold, or thirty and forty pounds of cotton, with which they were already acquainted. They also traded cotton and gold for pieces of bows, bottles, jugs and jars, like persons without reason, which I forbade because it was very wrong; and I gave to them many beautiful and pleasing things that I had brought with me, no value being taken in exchange, in order that I might the more easily make them friendly to me, that they might be made worshippers of Christ, and that they might be full of love towards our king, queen, and prince, and the whole Spanish nation; also that they might be zealous to search out and collect, and deliver to us those things of which they had plenty, and which we greatly needed. These people practice no kind of idolatry; on the contrary they firmly believe that all strength and power, and in fact all good things are in heaven, and that I had come down from thence with these ships and sailors; and in this belief I was received there after they had put aside fear. Nor are they slow or unskilled, but of excellent and acute understanding; and the men who have navigated that sea give an account of everything in an admirable manner; but they never

saw people clothed, nor these kind of ships. As soon as I reached that sea, I seized by force several Indians on the first island, in order that they might learn from us, and in like manner tell us about those things in these lands of which they themselves had knowledge; and the plan succeeded, for in a short time we understood them and they us, sometimes by gestures and signs, sometimes by words; and it was a great advantage to us. They are coming with me now, yet always believing that I descended from heaven, although they have been living with us for a long time, and are living with us to-day. And these men were the first who announced it wherever we landed, continually proclaiming to the others in a loud voice, "Come, come, and you will see the celestial people." Whereupon both women and men, both children and adults, both young men and old men, laying aside the fear caused a little before, visited us eagerly, filling the road with a great crowd, some bringing food, and some drink, with great love and extraordinary goodwill. On every island there are many canoes of a single piece of wood; and though narrow, yet in length and shape similar to our row-boats, but swifter in movement. They steer only by oars. Some of these boats are large, some small, some of medium size. Yet they row many of the larger row-boats with eighteen cross-benches, with which they cross to all those islands, which are innumerable, and with these boats they perform their trading, and carry on commerce among them. I saw some of these row-boats or canoes

which were carrying seventy and eighty rowers. In all these islands there is no difference in the appearance of the people, nor in the manners and language, but all understand each other mutually; a fact that is very important for the end which I suppose to be earnestly desired by our most illustrious king, that is, their conversion to the holy religion of Christ, to which in truth, as far as I can perceive, they are very ready and favorably inclined. I said before how I proceeded along the island Juana in a straight line from west to east 322 miles, according to which course and the length of the way, I am able to say that this Juana is larger than England and Scotland together; for besides the said 322 thousand paces, there are two more provinces in that part which lies towards the west, which I did not visit; one of these the Indians call Anan, whose inhabitants are born with tails. They extend to 180 miles in length, as I have learned from those Indians I have with me, who are all acquainted with these islands. But the circumference of Hispana is greater than all Spain from Colonia to Fontarabia.<sup>1</sup> This is easily proved, because its fourth side, which I myself passed along in a straight line from west to east, extends 540 miles. This island is to be desired and is very desirable, and not to be despised; in which, although as I have said, I solemnly took possession of all the others for our most invincible king, and their government is entirely committed to the said king, yet I especially took possession of a certain large town, in a very con-

<sup>1</sup> From Catalonia by the sea-coast to Fontarabia in Biscay.

venient location, and adapted to all kinds of gain and commerce, to which we give the name of our Lord of the Nativity. And I commanded a fort to be built there forthwith, which must be completed by this time ; in which I left as many men as seemed necessary, with all kinds of arms, and plenty of food for more than a year. Likewise one caravel, and for the construction of others men skilled in this trade and in other professions ; and also the extraordinary good will and friendship of the king of this island toward us. For those people are very amiable and kind, to such a degree that the said king gloried in calling me his brother. And if they should change their minds, and should wish to hurt those who remained in the fort, they would not be able, because they lack weapons, they go naked, and are too cowardly. For that reason those who hold the said fort are at least able to resist easily this whole island, without any imminent danger to themselves, so long as they do not transgress the regulations and command which we gave. In all these islands, as I have understood, each man is content with only one wife, except the princes or kings, who are permitted to have twenty. The women appear to work more than the men. I was not able to find out surely whether they have individual property, for I saw that one man had the duty of distributing to the others, especially refreshments, food, and things of that kind. I found no monstrosities among them, as very many supposed, but men of great reverence, and friendly. Nor are they black like the Ethiopians. They have

straight hair, hanging down. They do not remain where the solar rays send out the heat, for the strength of the sun is very great here, because it is distant from the equinoctial line, as it seems, only twenty-six degrees. On the tops of the mountains too the cold is severe, but the Indians, however, moderate it, partly by being accustomed to the place, and partly by the help of very hot victuals, of which they eat frequently and immoderately. And so I did not see any monstrosity, nor did I have knowledge of them any where, excepting a certain island named Charis,<sup>1</sup> which is the second in passing from Hispana to India. This island is inhabited by a certain people who are considered very warlike by their neighbors. These eat human flesh. The said people have many kinds of row-boats, in which they cross over to all the other Indian islands, and seize and carry away every thing that they can. They differ in no way from the others, only that they wear long hair like the women. They use bows and darts made of reeds, with sharpened shafts fastened to the larger end, as we have described. On this account they are considered warlike, wherefore the other Indians are afflicted with continual fear, but I regard them as of no more account than the others. These are the people who visit certain women, who alone inhabit the island Mateunin,<sup>2</sup> which is the first in passing from Hispana to India. These women, moreover, perform no kind of work of their sex, for they use bows and darts, like those I have described

1 Identified with Dominica.

2 Supposed to be Martinique.

of their husbands; they protect themselves with sheets of copper, of which there is great abundance among them. They tell me of another island greater than the aforesaid Hispana, whose inhabitants are without hair, and which abounds in gold above all the others. I am bringing with me men of this island and of the others that I have seen, who give proof of the things that I have described. Finally, that I may compress in few words the brief account of our departure and quick return, and the gain, I promise this, that if I am supported by our most invincible sovereigns with a little of their help, as much gold can be supplied as they will need, indeed as much of spices, of cotton, of chewing gum (which is only found in Chios), also as much of aloes wood, and as many slaves for the navy, as their majesties will wish to demand. Likewise rhu-barb and other kinds of spices, which I suppose these men whom I left in the said fort have already found, and will continue to find; since I remained in no place longer than the winds forced me, except in the town of the Nativity, while I provided for the building of the fort, and for the safety of all. Which things, although they are very great and remarkable, yet they would have been much greater, if I had been aided by as many ships as the occasion required. Truly great and wonderful is this, and not corresponding to our merits, but to the holy Christian religion, and to the piety and religion of our sovereigns, because what the human understanding could not attain, that the divine will has granted to human efforts. For God is

wont to listen to his servants who love his precepts, even in impossibilities, as has happened to us on the present occasion, who have attained that which hitherto mortal men have never reached. For if any one has written or said any thing about these islands, it was all with obscurities and conjectures; no one claims that he had seen them; from which they seemed like fables. Therefore let the king and queen, the princes and their most fortunate kingdoms, and all other countries of Christendom give thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has bestowed upon us so great a victory and gift. Let religious processions be solemnized; let sacred festivals be given; let the churches be covered with festive garlands. Let Christ rejoice on earth, as he rejoices in heaven, when he foresees coming to salvation so many souls of people hitherto lost. Let us be glad also, as well on account of the exaltation of our faith, as on account of the increase of our temporal affairs, of which not only Spain, but universal Christendom will be partaker. These things that have been done are thus briefly related. Farewell. Lisbon, the day before the ides of March.<sup>1</sup>

Christopher Columbus, admiral of the Ocean fleet.

<sup>1</sup> March 14th, 1493.



Epigram of R. L. de Corbaria, bishop of Monte Peloso.

To the most invincible King of Spain.

No region now can add to Spain's great deeds :  
To such men all the world is yet too small.  
An Orient land, found far beyond the waves,  
Will add, great Betica, to thy renown.  
Then to Columbus, the true finder, give  
Due thanks ; but greater still to God on high ;  
Who makes new kingdoms for himself and thee :  
Both firm and pious let thy conduct be.

